

## ICOMOS Lebanon - Statement of Concern on National Heritage Site / UNESCO – Memory of the World Commemorative steles of Nahr el-Kalb, Mount Lebanon

21/02/2020

### Statement of Concern on the destruction of Cultural Heritage

*The International Council on Monuments and Sites of Lebanon (ICOMOS-Lebanon), as representatives of the national heritage community, is very much concerned about the current condition of protection and preservation of the Promontory and the Commemorative steles of Nahr el-Kalb inscribed since 2005 as UNESCO – Memory of the World and also on the 2019 Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage sites.*

The site is today endangered by the construction of a complex of buildings that will serve as the headquarters of a political party, the CPL (*Courant Patriotique Libre*). The implementation of these buildings will completely and irreversibly mutilate the Heritage Site by the excavations and the intrusion on this Historical Landscape.

The complex is foreseen to be implemented directly on the promontory at less than few meters from the Commemorative steles of Nahr el-Kalb impacting the direct visual context. This promontory, entrusted to the **Lebanese Maronite Order** since hundreds of years, is today flouted by a political decision, without any respect of a minimum buffer zone even not defined by authorities in charge. With this direct intrusion, the site of the steles will lose all its chances to be listed to the World Heritage proving that the site is at risk and not protected.

We then strongly ask for an **immediate halt of the construction project** and an **urgent reconsideration for the delocalization of the complex** before it is too late. The non respect of our cultural heritage by our own government and the **Lebanese Maronite Order** is outrageous for the preservation of the History and Memory of our Country for the future generations.

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### Note

The steles of Nahr el-Kalb, the Lycus or Dog River, sum up the entire history of Lebanon, from the Bronze Age (2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC) to the present, evoking clearly the successive advances of the Pharaonic, Assyro-Babylonian, Greek, Roman, Arab, French and British armies which braved all the obstacles surrounding this difficult and very steep crossing point to carve commemorative steles on the rocks. **Memory of the World – UNESCO (Register in 2005)**

# ICOMOS LIBAN

Conseil international des monuments et des sites



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**The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, not for profit international organization, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world cultural heritage. As an official advisory body to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS evaluates nominations and advises on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.**

ICOMOS facts and figures (February 2019)

10,546 Individual Members in 151 countries, 271 Institutional Members, 107 National Committees, 28 International Scientific Committees

ICOMOS Lebanon facts and figures (January 2020)

50 Individual Members, 2 Scientific Committees

